Gen. Ridgway on The Folly of War With Red China, P. 4

Pentagon Spy Scare to Block Nuclear Test Agreement, P. 2; On Again, Off Again Crisis at Quemoy, P. 3

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Why The Pentagon Is So Anxious to Reach the Moon

The Pentagon press office was busy giving out background releases on the lunar probe all day Saturday and a panel of experts held a news conference Sunday afternoon at the National Academy of Sciences. But none touched on the motivations which lead our military to spend millions on the problem of reaching the moon, and not just the moon alone. For with the lunar releases was one announcing that the Navy would soon send a manned balloon 80,000 feet up to take a close look at Mars in order to determine its water vapor content. Perhaps if there is enough water on Mars to float a boat, the Navy will claim jurisdiction. The services are staking out the planets; the Air Force has its eye on Venus.

Two Secret Lunar Briefings

We'd like to call attention to two briefings behind closed doors on Capitol Hill earlier this year which have gone unnoticed. They show that the military men behind these space projects approach the new scientific wonders with the minds of comic strip characters, ready like Buck Rogers to carry out among the far stars only the same small boy savageries and cold war hates. One briefing was by Lt. Gen. Donald L. Putt, Deputy Chief of Staff (Research and Development) U. S. Air Force before the House Committee on Armed Services Feb. 25. The other was by Richard E. Horner, Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Research and Development before the House Appropriations Committee on March 11. An unclassified version of what Gen. Putt said may be found at pages 4911-23 of the Armed Services hearings. Horner's testimony was printed in the hearings on the Air Force Budget for fiscal 1959. We recommend them to anybody running short of nightmares.

The General disclosed that the Air Force's ultimate objective was to establish a missile base on the moon, and outlined its usefulness. Gen. Putt said that since there was no atmosphere and little gravity on the moon, less energy would be required "to shoot a warhead from the moon to the earth" than from the earth to the moon. "Warheads," he explained, "could be catapulted from shafts sunk deep into the moon's surface." Gen. Putt declared the moon "might provide a retaliation base of considerable advantage over earth-bound nations," using the term with condescension, as if *we* were on the moon already.

New Dimensions for Mutual Deterrence

Gen. Putt said that if we had missile bases on the moon "an enemy would have to launch an overwhelming nuclear attack against those bases one to two days prior to attacking the continental United States." Otherwise the moon bases, observing an attack on the U. S., could retaliate by destroying the attacker. Even if the enemy destroyed us by surprise attack, our moon bases would destroy him. On the other hand, if the enemy attacked our moon bases first to make such retaliation impossible, the attack would be observed from earth and give us warning. Thus the strategy of mutual deterrence would be given a new lunar dimension.

Lest anyone think Gen. Putt had merely stopped off to testify on his way to a long quiet stay at a good rest home, this can be checked against the Horner testimony. The Assistant Secretary of the Air Force said one advantage of a missile base on the moon is that the flight of the missile could be observed "all the way from the moon's surface to the target, which is something which cannot be done from one point on the earth to another far distant point on the earth." Mr. Horner thought that moon bases might some day break a stalemate of terror between the U. S. and the U. S. S. R. when "we have developed such a capability to obliterate Russia and presumably they have developed [such] a similar capability to obliterate us" that neither side dares fire. If we could then establish a missile base on the moon, we would again gain the initiative. When our high brass sees visions and dreams dreams, this is what they see. When their heavens open, missiles *wham*.

Next on Mars or Venus

And what if the Russians acquire moon bases, too? And a stalemate of terror develops on the moon as well as on the earth? For the answer to these questions, we must turn back to Gen. Putt's secret briefing. "We should not regard control of the moon," he said, "as the ultimate means of insuring peace among earth nations." (Note how all these murderous monstrosities are represented as means of "insuring peace.") This would be only "a first step toward stations on planets far more distant, from which control over the moon might then be exercised." A missile base on, let us say, Mars could break a stalemate on the moon. Even if the Russians destroyed *both* the U. S. and its moon base in one swift surprise attack, our base on Mars could then destroy *both* their moon base and their country. The advantage would hold presumably until they had established a similar missile base on Mars or some other planet, only to be checked again by the next move, which would perhaps set up artillery outside the solar system altogether. Thus, as the Pentagon maps it, peace by mutual terror would spread outward toward the far stars.

This seems to us a good time to recall the Latin word for moon, which is of course luna, and to suggest that before service rivalry explodes all over the skies, we establish a fourth branch of the defense establishment for space warfare and call it the Department of Lunacy.

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A Mystery at Geneva and Why the Russians Want A Permanent Ban or None

Pentagon Opens Campaign Against Nuclear Test Cessation With Spy Scare

That spy-scare story by Hanson W. Baldwin in the *New York Times* Oct. 10 is only the opening gun of a Pentagon campaign to prevent an agreement on cessation of nuclear tests. The Defense Department was so sure that the Geneva talks would come to nothing that it didn't even have an observer present. The agreement by the experts has galvanized it into action. The story was intended to spread the idea that the Russians must have gotten their data on secret U. S. tests in the Pacific last summer from espionage since the Pentagon is sure that detection methods are not foolproof. But the only evidence given Baldwin in a very thin briefing was a speech by Lieut. Gen. Trudeau, the Army's chief of research and development, before the American Society for Industrial Security here on September 16. Trudeau's McCarthyite thesis was that "the advanced state of Soviet technology today is due more to Soviet success in espionage and subversion than it is to their scientific apparatus." Even the Scripps-Howard local paper, the Washington *Daily News*, slapped him down next day with an editorial headed "Let's Stop Kidding Ourselves."

Two Tests That Never Happened?

An examination of the transcript of the Geneva talks does however turn up an oddity. On July 28 the Russians handed the U. S. delegates a list of 32 U. S. tests in the Pacific test series this year, giving dates and exact time to the minute. "If there are any errors," the Russians said, "you will, perhaps, be kind enough to point them out to us." The list was intended to be a demonstration of how accurately tests could be detected even without listening posts. On August 4, the U. S. delegation in reply cited "as examples of possible errors" the fact that as to two of these explosions, on April 29 and July 14, "we on the Western side have no knowledge of any nuclear tests carried out anywhere at these times." The U. S. delegates asked to see the original data. The Soviet delegates declined to submit them, but said that the methods used for detection were no different from those discussed at the conference. The Soviet delegates pointed out that the U. S. had announced only 14 tests; they had detected 32; we claimed that we had no knowledge of 2. This left 16 tests more than we had announced. Whether the Russians mistook two explosions for nuclear or whether two explosions were kept secret even from our delegates or whether two were duds but somehow detectable . . . these are all possibilities.

The President's position on testing is weak. He allowed the technical talks to go forward despite Pentagon and AEC opposition, but to appease them permitted what seems to have been the longest and heaviest test series ever held: 30 last summer and 10 in the current series plus the British tests. This infuriated the Russians. According to figures in the Baldwin story, the U. S. has detonated about 140 nuclear explosions, the Soviet Union about 60 and Britain, 21. The Russian position at the UN is that they will cease tests only if the West agrees to end them permanently; otherwise, we can start up again after one year and they will "never catch up." The Russians have their own "Pentagon" and "AEC" mentalities to contend with, and (not strangely) there are Russians as distrustful of our promises as we are of theirs.

The same type of military mind exists on both sides, and they help each other against those in Washington and Moscow who would like to see an agreement. Since it is easier to play on fear and hate than on hope and trust, the odds are increasingly against cessation of nuclear testing unless neutrals led by India can bring moral pressure through the UN on both sides.

Addled Adlai

Adlai Stevenson says that New York State's election is being regarded as a referendum on foreign policy. At the same time he expresses "a high regard for Nelson," whom he calls "a very worthy candidate for the Republican party."

This is the kind of flabby superficiality that has alienated those who (like myself) once admired Adlai. Question No. 1: How can an election be regarded as a referendum on foreign policy, when the two major party candidates have only made vague references to it? Question No. 2: As seen from Washington, "Nelson's" position, which Adlai so admires, is to the right of Eisenhower's.

The Rockefeller report, prepared by a board of which Nelson was chairman and Dr. Henry A. Kissinger research director, is for limited nuclear war in such situations as Quemoy-Matsu and Indo-China (both avoided by Ike) and against cessation of nuclear testing. Kissinger's article in the current Foreign Affairs is being used by the Pentagon to undercut the Geneva talks on testing which Ike approved.

Even Washington's Most Conservative Paper Sneers at Democratic China Policy

"For the most part, the [Democratic Advisory Council foreign policy] statement does not set forth any policy worthy of its name. The council . . . says the immediate problem of Quemoy and Matsu can and should be dealt with promptly. The statement does not get around to saying exactly how. . . . What it does say is that the whole issue should be dumped in the lap of the United Nations. . . . This is much easier said than done. . . .

"How might Communist China, despite its 'no meddling' pronouncement, be brought into line? It is in this respect that the Democratic statement looks at reality and then looks quickly away. 'This crisis,' the statement says, 'reflects a much broader problem, the problem of our longer term relations with Communist China . . .'

"This language, if it means anything, is a guarded hint that an ultimate solution of the Formosa problem must rest on admission of Communist China to the UN and possibly on diplomatic recognition by the U. S. Of course, this is a hint, and only a hint. . . . Still, the men who signed the Advisory Council's pronouncement must know that the UN cannot possibly settle the Formosa problem, or the problem of Quemoy and Matsu, as long as Communist China is excluded from UN membership.

"It probably would not have been politically expedient for the council to say such a thing at this time. With it left unsaid, however, the 'foreign policy statement' does not really set forth any policy at all."

—Editorial, Washington Evening Star, Oct. 14.

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Dulles Feels Triumphant as Red China Backs Down; No Negotiation in Sight

Does Peking Have A Surprise Up Its Sleeve, or Is It Just Face-Saving?

How explain the on-again, off-again flareup over Quemoy? Could it be that Peking has something up its sleeve? Might there be a deal brewing to take over the island from within? Is this why the garrison is urged to take advantage of the new cease-fire "to strengthen their entrenchment"? Or is all this just a face-saver for a retreat? Did misgivings at home pull Peking back from brinksmanship, too?

Dulles feels triumphant, and at press conference last week indicated that he no longer saw any need to give the appearance of flexibility. The press corps, which had pictured a "new Dulles" after his last conference on September 30, was taken aback. Eisenhower next day emphasized that we had no intention of "coercing" Chiang into thinning out his troops, much less in abandoning the offshore islands. The Secretary of State said he thought the offshore islands were covered by that provision of our mutual defense treaty with Chiang which forbids aggressive action from his territory without mutual agreement. On the basis of the treaty, the U. S. could assure Peking and the world that we would veto any such action from the offshore islands. But when Dulles was asked whether we would give such assurances, he replied "I think technically that we could" but "whether we could make an arrangement that would be binding on us in the future, I don't know, I would somewhat doubt that." The reluctance to assure Peking no force would be used against the mainland from the offshore islands contrasts with his declaration two weeks earlier that any renunciation of force would be mutual.

Chiang Always Profits from Retreat

The policy seems to be not to give way under threat of force and not to negotiate when the pistol is packed away. These crisis seem to benefit no one but Chiang. For agreeing to a cease-fire in the Fall of 1954, Chiang got a Mutual Defense Pact. For evacuating the Tachens in January, 1955, he got the Formosa resolution. Now, according to an article in the *Ta Hua Evening News* in Taipeh (on the UPI news ticker Oct. 14 but not in the next day's papers I saw) Chiang is willing to reduce his forces on Quemoy and Matsu if the U. S. publicly pledges itself to defend those islands. "Such an arrangement," said the UPI's dispatch from Taipeh, "would represent one of the most significant diplomatic advances in the Formosa strait since the 1955 signing of the Sino-American Mutual Defense Treaty." Indeed, it would. Chiang seems to parlay every setback into increased aid and support from the U. S. We have to pay for his very retreat. If the Reds ever drive him off Formosa, we'll probably have to give him Puerto Rico.

It should be kept in mind that Chiang has two cards to play. It is assumed that he can always commit suicide by attacking the mainland and setting off a world war. He has another way of bringing pressure on us. He has been offered —publicly—by Peking a high post in the government if he will defect. He probably could get autonomy on Formosa for his lifetime. If he ever makes a deal with Peking, we'd lose our base on Formosa. Krishna Menon says—but no one listens to him—that talks have been going on between the two Chinese sides for two years. When a reporter said he could not conceive of negotiations between Chiang and the Reds, Menon answered "that's because you're not Chinese." Bret Harte ought to be required reading in the State Department. "For ways that are dark," as he wrote, there's nothing like "the heathen Chinee."

As the Secretary Said Last Tuesday— "We Are Dealing With Very Shifty People"

"Mr. Secretary, inasmuch as you say you do not think it was sound for the Nationalist Chinese to have built up their forces on Quemoy and Matsu, I would like to ask you if you now think it would be sound to work out some arrangement for the withdrawal of those forces from those two islands?

". . . If there were a cease-fire in the area which seemed to be reasonably dependable, I think it would be foolish to keep these large forces on these islands."

—Dulles at press conference, Sept. 30.

"Mr. Secretary, have you urged or do you intend to urge Chiang Kai-shek to reduce the military strength of forces on Quemoy?

"We have no plans whatsoever for urging him to do that. . . ."

—Dulles at press conference, Oct. 14.

Why Call Congress Back Into Session, When It Only Acts As Rubber Stamp?

A favorite standby with Democratic and liberal politicians called on to say something about the Far East crisis is to demand that Congress be called into session. Judging by past experience, the Administration might easily stampede a special session into voting new war powers.

It is useful to recall what happened in January, 1955, when, by passing the Formosa resolution, Congress for the first time in U. S. history gave a President a blank check for war. In both Houses this revolutionary proposal was voted out of Committee without public hearings; there seem to have been executive sessions but only Administration spokesmen were heard.

In the Senate, many liberals now critical of Far Eastern policy were conspicuous by their absence from the ranks of the opposition. Only Lehman, Morse and Langer voted against the resolution. In the House, where the Democratic leadership allowed only two hours of debate, the vote was 409-3, with 22 not voting. Only Barden (D., N. C.), Siler (R., Ky.) and Sheehan (R., Ill.) voted "no," the last named apparently because he wanted a declaration of war against Russia instead!

The other day ten liberal Democratic members of the House sent the President a telegram asking for a special session on the Quemoy-Matsu problem. The ten were Boyle Ill.), Blatnik (Minn.), Chelf (Key.), Green (Ore.), Holifield (Cal.), McCarthy (Minn.), Reuss (Wis.), Roosevelt (Cal.), Thompson (N. J.) and Vanik (Ohio).

We have no desire to embarrass these Congressmen, some of whom are our friends. But checking back, we found that only Holifield expressed misgivings during the debate on the Formosa resolution and all ten voted for it.

In the Senate, among the liberal Democrats who voted to give the Administration a blank check for war, despite its calculated ambiguity about the offshore islands, were Fulbright, Green, Hennings, Humphrey, Kefauver, Mansfield, McNamara, Murray, Neuberger and O'Mahoney.

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The Then Chief of Staff's Account of the 1954 Crisis Throws Light on This One

Gen. Ridgway Tells Why He Opposed War With Red China Over Quemoy

In 1954, General Ridgway as U. S. Army Chief of Staff, opposed the Dulles-Nixon-Radford group which wanted us to intervene, first in Indo-China and then over Quemoy and Matsu. His view of the offshore islands question throws so vivid a light on the present crisis that we reprint it here from "Soldier: The Memoirs of Matthew B. Ridgway" which Harper's published in 1956.

"Not long after the abortive idea of intervention in Indo-China had been laid to rest, there came the flare-up over Quemoy and Matsu. Again there was strong feeling in high places that here we should take a stand. And again I found myself in disagreement with the interventionists.

"I had studied the maps with care. Quemoy and Matsu were two small islands, occupied by our friends the Nationalist Chinese. They lay within artillery range of the Red Chinese on the mainland. They constituted, to my way of thinking, no more than listening posts on an outpost line of observation. They had little value as offensive bases. Matsu would be useless in this respect, and Quemoy not much better, for there is no major military objective on the mainland that lies within three hundred miles. If we were to go into Red China with ground forces, we certainly would not use Quemoy. Neither do the Reds have to have Quemoy for an invasion of Formosa. It lies along the best and shortest route, but there are many other jumping-off places.

Not Sure Reds Preparing for Invasion

"I had also studied the intelligence reports. I had as much information, I suppose, as did anybody else about Red activities on the mainland opposite Matsu and Quemoy. To my mind, what the Chinese were doing there did not justify a conclusion that they were planning an attack on Formosa. Their activities could just as well be defensive as offensive in nature. They were building airfields, and rail lines, which could rush troops to the seacoast in the event of an invasion *from* Formosa. But there was no indication they were concentrating ground troops there, or organizing an invasion force of their own.

". . . the Quemoy-Matsu issue faded into what seems for the moment to be mutually satisfactory stalemate. It will, no doubt, flare up again and again. There is no doubt in my mind that we would go to war to defend Formosa or the Pescadores, and we should, for the loss of either of these would make a serious breach in our outermost line of defense in the Pacific, and cause our good friends abroad to doubt our resolution. But the juridicial, historical and geographical background of Quemoy and Matsu is radically different. To go to war for Quemoy or Matsu, to me would seem an unwarranted and tragic course to take.

"I do not for a moment wish to impugn the intellectual honesty of any others who did not share this view. They sincerely felt, I think, that it were better to face the issue then and there, to make it clear to the Reds that any encroachment on Chinese Nationalist territory, however slight, would mean war.

Not in Our Interest to Destroy China

"To me that concept is completely repugnant. I make no pretense to clairvoyance. But such an action would be almost impossible to limit. It would bring us into direct conflict with the Red Chinese. It would spread to full and all-out war, employing all the terrible weapons at our command. And we could, by such an all-out effort, conquer China.

"But I challenge the thesis that destroying the military might of Red China would be in our long-range interest. We could create there, by military means, a great power vacuum. Then we would have to go in there with thousands of men to fill that vacuum—which would bring us face to face with Russia along a 7,000-mile frontier. If we failed to go in, then Russia herself would fill it, and the threat to our own security would not have abated one iota.

"To my way of thinking the desire to intervene in Indo-China, the willingness to use force in dealing with Quemoy and Matsu reflects a thinking which trends dangerously toward acceptance of the doctrine of 'preventive war.'

"To me nothing could more tragically demonstrate our complete and utter moral bankruptcy than for us deliberately to initiate a 'preventive war.' Once we take that absolutely fatal step our civilization would be doomed."

CORRECTION: IFS (and Harvey O'Connor) Talk on Foreign Policy
Commander Hotel, 16 Garden St., Cambridge, Mass., Oct. 23, NOT Nov. 23, 8:30 p.m.

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